Hoover Alleged Duped by a Spy

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NEW YORK—Former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was duped over a period of years by a Soviet KGB intelligence agent code-named "Fedora" who offered his services to the FBI in 1962 but was deliberately providing the FBI director with "disinformation," according to an article in the issue of New York magazine released yesterday.

The article, which deals with "moles", or high level counter-agents implanted in rival intelligence organizations, is based on an upcoming book by Edward Jay Epstein, the author of "Inquest," which 12 years ago severely criticized the Warren Commission and its report.

The new book, "Legend," claim that Lee Harvey Oswald, the assassin of President Kennedy, was recruited by the Soviet KGB in Japan in the late 1950s, where as a Marine Oswald worked as a radar operator at the Atsugi U2 base. It also speculates that Oswald provided U2 information to the Soviets which they used in the interrogation of the late Francis Gary Powers, the U2 pilot who was shot down over the Soviet Union in 1960.

After Oswald's stay in Russia, the KGB, by this account, constructed a "legend," or cover story, that would hide his KGB connections.

"The Soviets never intended for Oswald to kill President Kennedy, but when he did, they sent a fake defector, Yuri Nosenko, to the United States, to tell a story that would corroborate Oswald's legend," according to the convoluted article, which reads like an attempt at a defictionalized John le Carre spy novel plot.

Nosenko, Epstein alleges, approached the Central Intelligence Agency in Geneva in January, 1964, soon after Kennedy's assassination, claiming he was the KGB officer who had superintended Oswald's file during his three years in Russia.

Nosenko "stated categorically that Oswald had had no dealings with the KGB," and then asked to be allowed to defect because he claimed the KGB had wind of his CIA contacts and therefor would kill him if he returned to Russia.

The CIA brought him to the United States, given his status as an Oswald witness (his information was presented to the Warren Commission), but in turn checked out Nosenko's "legend' through "Fedora," who was the FBI's double agent.

Fedora confirmed Nosenko's claims, Epstein says. But when the CIA discovered inconsistencies in Nosenko's story, the agency suspected that Fedora had also been deliberately supplying false information, including the fake cover story.

Nosenko was subjected to intensive CIA interrogation, according to Epstein, because the agency had been warned earlier by another Soviet defector, Maj. Anatoli Golitsin, a senior KGB officer, "that the Soviets had planted one mole deep within the CIA and another within the FBI, with the objectives of promoting and advancing them to positions of leadership in American intelligence." However, Nosenko never significantly changed his story.

Epstein says he extensively interviewed Hoover's deputy director, William C. Sullivan, who died last year in a hunting accident, and Powers, who died last year in a helicopter crash, along with 200 other witnesses in gathering data for the book, which is supposed to trace Oswald's connections to Soviet and Cuban intelligence agencies as well as the CIA.